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RUCNOSC/ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY COOPERATION IN EUROPE PRIORITY
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0136
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0258
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0531
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0300
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0560
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0136
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0168
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0595
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0269
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0508
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000183

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT MARCH 21 2007

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) SUMMARY:

-- Afghanistan: SYG de Hoop Scheffer advised the NAC to be ready to consider support for ESDP police mission. SYG expressed his anger over Der Spiegel's report of NAC session on March 14. Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) Henault outlined the goals of just-launched Operation Nowruz. IMS noted increasing insurgent intent to target civilians and described aid and relief efforts in Helmand and Uruzgan. UK and U.S. criticize Italian/Afghan prisoner exchange with the Taliban. Ambassador Nuland called for the UNAMA CERP fund to disburse money in coordination with ISAF operations.

-- Kosovo: SYG underscored the importance of upcoming NAC-R for determining NATO's role in post-status Kosovo; PermReps agree on COMKFOR visit to Belgrade.

-- Darfur: ASYG Jochems visited Addis Ababa March 14-16 and circulated his report to delegations.

-- Iraq: CMC highlighted that Iraqi input for gendarmerie training has not been received, slowing mission planning. JFC-Naples recommendation on training is due to SHAPE by May 15.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

2.(C) SYG de Hoop Scheffer stated that the EU continued to plan for its upcoming ESDP police mentoring and rule of law mission in Afghanistan, and told the NAC to expect an EU request for logistics and security assistance once a CONOPS was approved. The SYG reassured the NAC he was personally following the status of ongoing negotiations with Qatar over the status of the ISAF liaison cell at USCENTCOM's Combined Air Operations Center at Al-Udeid airbase.

3.(C) The SYG, reacting to a Der Spiegel account of the March 14 NAC session which alleged tensions between COMISAF

and several Allies, including Germany, told the NAC he was angry and disappointed,⁸ as it was clear that the information underpinning the article had come from inside NATO. The SYG noted his intent to organize a NAC with relevant international organizations from Afghanistan, as well as non-governmental organizations. The U.S. and the Netherlands argued that it would be better to hold such a meeting in Afghanistan during the NAC's mid-April trip.

4.(C) Following March 20 notification to the NAC of the March 21 commencement of Operation Now Ruz, CMC Henault reminded Council) already previously briefed during Now Ruz planning) that the pan-theater operation aimed to: drive a wedge between the population and the insurgents; discredit OMF and disrupt their command and control; expand the reach of the Afghan government; and enhance public confidence in the GOA, Afghan security forces, and ISAF. It would rely heavily on intelligence, information operations, and engagement with the local populations and governments.

5.(C) Noting the recent attack on a U.S. Embassy civilian convoy, IMS AD Intelligence RADM Clayton assessed that overall insurgent activity levels were higher now than at this time in 2006, but that OMF preferred to focus on low-risk, high-impact targets, such as foreign civilians. He provided some reconstruction and development details behind Operation Achilles in northern Helmand (a tactical operation within the overarching concept of Now Ruz,⁸ according to CMC Henault), noting 32 R&D projects worth 700,000 euros were ongoing, with 194 projects worth two million euros planned for the near future. Four Dutch infantry platoons from Task Force Uruzgan are engaged in flood relief in the Dehrawood district, and have evacuated

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350 residents, with operations continuing.

6.(C) Bulgaria announced its government's decision to increase its presence in Afghanistan by over five times its current level: a 135-person mechanized company will operate in Kabul with Italy as of June 20, and 200 soldiers will take on force protection duties at Kandahar airfield in July.

7.(C) Ambassador Nuland welcomed the Bulgarian announcement of troop increases. She asked the SYG to task SCR Everts to work with UN SRSG Koenigs in Kabul to develop Koenigs' idea to establish a UN fund similar to the U.S. quick-impact CERP funds, which would enable the UN to support political and economic initiatives with money distributed in close cooperation with ISAF and PRT commanders. Responding to earlier calls for a detailed U.S. brief on training of the Afghan national security forces, she proposed that during the NAC's April trip to Afghanistan, the NAC receive a detailed brief from U.S. and German officials involved in ANSF training. This would permit the NAC to receive a single, comprehensive view of where ANSF training efforts stand.

8.(C) The French PermRep noted positively that Operation Now Ruz appears to be striving to implement the Comprehensive Approach. Canada noted the recent travel of three officials to Afghanistan, including MOD O'Connor, and asked for an update on the status of the NATO-Afghan Cooperation Program prior to the NAC's trip to Afghanistan. Ambassador Nuland supported this request. Spain noted its appreciation to NMAs for the notification prior to the launch of Operation Now Ruz, and asked for periodic updates over the coming weeks.

9.(C) The UK Deputy PermRep, supported by Ambassador Nuland, noted reports that the recent release of captured Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo had resulted from a prisoner exchange with the Taliban and restated standing policy against negotiating with terrorists. The UK and U.S. asked CMC and the SYG what, if any role, ISAF had played in the process. Both said they would look into it. The Italian Deputy PermRep said he would seek more details from capital, and expressed his government's thanks to the Karzai

government and Allied government in southern Afghanistan. SYG de Hoop Scheffer said this issue has political bearing and implications on ISAF, and that he would raise it an upcoming PermReps, lunch or coffee meeting. He noted that the role of President Karzai could not be overlooked.

Kosovo

10.(C) The SYG stressed the importance of the upcoming NAC-R on March 27, which will allow for further discussion on NATO,s preparations for a post-status Kosovo. He stated that KFOR will maintain a level presence and vigilance throughout the next weeks. (The NAC plans to travel to Kosovo on April 2.) The SYG reported PermReps, agreement on March 20 that COMKFOR could go to Belgrade. The CMC followed up last week,s NAC discussions regarding COMKFOR,s level of engagement with the Serbian military authorities, outlining JFC Naples and COMKFOR,s responsibilities on liaison with the relevant Serbian authorities. The last high level meeting between COMKFOR and the Serbian CHOD was February 21 at Nis.

Darfur

11.(U) The SYG noted the March 14-16 visit to Addis Ababa by DASG for Operations Jochems, adding that a report of the visit has been circulated to delegations.

Iraq

12.(C) The CMC explained that some supporting input needed for the gendarmerie training plan from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior has not yet been received, which has slowed planning for the mission. NTM-I has sent input to JFC-Naples based on the last reconnaissance team's visit. JFC-Naples plans to

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add input and offers from nations and forward its recommendations to SHAPE by May 15.

NULAND